

MCA Advisory



The Journal of the Medal Collectors of America

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Philadelphia ANA World's Fair of Money

Philadelphia Convention Center

Annual MCA Meeting

3:00 – 5:00, Room 104 A,

August 7-10, 2012

Check out our MCA Website:



WWW.MEDALCOLLECTORS.ORG

~ President's Message ~

Are we having fun yet? It's summer, an opportunity to get away from our usual workday routine; a time to travel, see new sights, relax and take time to enjoy our recreational pursuits. In between the beach, barbeques, and trips, the summer may provide more free time to delve into the various aspects of our hobby. Some get involved with the scholastic side of the hobby, searching references, periodicals, and archives for information that will add interest to the pieces in their collections. Others will check out Ebay, go to coin shows, and pour over auction catalogues, in the ongoing quest for new prizes to add to their collections. Along these lines, there have been many recent opportunities to participate in numismatic sales featuring medallic items to tempt the collector. I had the opportunity to travel to Baltimore for the June Whitman Show. A highlight of this show each year is the annual auction by Presidential Coin and Antique Company. Joe Levine, owner of Presidential, is known for producing scholarly catalogues with a broad range of exnumia for sale. This sale was no exception, with a variety of items, including an extensive run of ANS medals, a series replete with works by a number of the finest artists producing some distinctive examples of medallic art. Collectors of ANS medals were given an additional chance to bid on items at auction: Stack's Bowers also had a run of ANS medal in their recent sale.

But let me get back to my original question: are you having fun? How many of us can say that we truly enjoy our collections and are having fun with the hobby? Once acquired, do the items in your collection stimulate further study, display and conversation, or do they end up sitting in a drawer or vault? If you're reading this issue of the Advisory, I would guess that you appreciate the social nature of numismatics and medal collecting, and enjoy the intellectual exchange and discussion which our club affords. After all, medals are more than discs of metal with designs impressed on their surfaces; they may be considered works of art, records of human history, or a medium of propaganda or social protest. They may portray images of the great, near-great, famous and those aspiring to fame and fortune. And if there's a medal in your collection that you find fascinating, chances are there are other collectors out who feel the same. What could be more fun than a lively discussion about medals that you collect and appreciate with fellow collectors? Even those who are not dedicated collectors may understand what it is that is so special about that important historical

medal or charming art medal if you take the time to explain, and you may even create a new collector in the process.

As I write this, the American Numismatic Convention is just days away. In addition to the bourse and club meetings, one of my favorite activities in past years has been attending the Numismatic Theater presentations. A frequent presenter who consistently has an interesting story to tell, often with a medal as the focus of the talk, is Thomas Sebring. I am fortunate to count Tom as a friend via numismatics. He will often exhibit a piece and then give a talk to expand on the information in the exhibit. His enthusiasm about his subjects is obvious. Is he having fun? The answer is a resounding "Yes"!

I'm not suggesting that everyone has to become a lecturer on historical medals, but the hobby is much more rewarding when shared with others. Join a local club; it's fun to show off your greatest acquisitions to an appreciative audience. Share your knowledge with your children or grandchildren; after all, they are the future of the hobby. I've spoken to my son's fourth grade class about coins and medals. They were fascinated by the items, particularly those with a good story behind them. My original 20 minute talk grew to an hour of show-and-tell, with the children asking lots of questions. By showing your collection, you are having fun and others are having fun as well. 🍀

~David Menchell

ANA World's Fair of Money

August 7 - 11, 2012
Philadelphia Convention Center



MCA Annual Meeting

Thursday, August 9, 2012
3:00 – 5:00 PM
Room 104 A

From the Editor

Marcy Leavitt Bourne's article in the May-June issue deserved a perfect rendition and, alas, ye editor added a mistake. The sentence as we printed it: "There is another word, though, contained in 'truth', and that is 'truth', which is compassion" should have read "There is another word, though, contained in 'truth', and that is 'ruth', which is compassion." By editing "ruth" to "truth", we emasculated an important sentiment that the author was attempting to convey. Our abject apologies.

In our last issue, we featured the Nathanael Greene medal given by Congress to Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Morris. Because of the accompanying contemporary documents, the provenance of the piece is beyond dispute. In the present issue, we have an Admiral Vernon medal whose ownership is traced back to George Washington and his older step-brother Lawrence before him. In this case, the author, Spencer Peck, does not have the "smoking gun" of definitive contemporary correspondence. Rather, he has relied on a mixture of the broad history of events, the narrower history of the Washington family and his own keen instincts to build a credible chain of ownership. One can disagree, and we do, with at least one of the necessarily qualitative links in Mr. Peck's case. However, he marshals enough probability overall to make his point. Thus researched, the "pocket piece" of George Washington becomes perhaps the single most important of the many thousand Vernon medals extant.

My son writes (see below) that he reads The Advisory back to front (not very flattering, he). This issue has a particularly rich compendium of Letters to the Editor which you (as well as he) will certainly enjoy. Indeed, whereas we are always on the lookout for lead articles, our mail pouch is full to overflowing. May it long remain so.

Gerry Muhl and Alex Shagin are eager to collaborate on a new Club medal for 2013. What is needed is one or two volunteers to help with the bookkeeping and fulfillment. Who wants to step forth and shine? Being part of the Muhl-Shagin team will be a source of pride for anyone that becomes involved, at the same time that such service will be helping the Club to build a tradition.

In its ANA catalogue of August 7th to August 10th, Stacks Bowers offers one of the finest collections of *Comitia Americana* medals ever to cross the block. Called "The Dorchester Heights Collection", it features many of the great rarities of the series, including DeFleury, Jones in silver, Morgan and Greene. Rarer still are the trial strikings (clichés and splashers) of Gates, Jones (obverse and

reverse), Lee, Morgan (obverse and reverse) the *Libertas Americana* and the Diplomatic Medal (obverse and reverse).

As if these high points were not enough, The Washington Before Boston is in superb condition and most of the other lots would rate "extremely fine" by European grading standards. The lot descriptions are decent or better, though generally more abbreviated than the material would seem to warrant (was the cataloguer edited?). Almost inspired is the wording of Lot 4094. A reverse cliché of the *Libertas Americana*, wherein the provenance is traced back to Alexandre Brongniart and Benjamin Franklin. This item is not unique, as suggested, but it is pretty darned important.



**Libertas Americana Reverse Trial Strike Cliché
Stacks-Bowers Lot 4094**

The description of the DeFleury medal, Lot 4078, opines that the piece is "nearly as rare as the original Anthony Wayne or Nathanael Greene medals, though not as rare as the uncollectible John Stewart." Alas, Wayne is as uncollectible as Stewart and the cataloguer should know this.



**Original DeFleury Comitia Americana medal
Stacks-Bowers Lot 4078**

Our principal quarrel with this otherwise brilliant consignment concerns the lot estimates, which range from high to very high. One example will suffice: Lot 4081, the Jones in silver, is estimated at \$50,000-\$75,000; the selfsame piece hammered at \$18,000 in Ford October 2004. In our opinion, inflated estimates are more likely to scare away prospective interest than they are to incite bidders to scale the heights. 🍋

~ John W Adams

Webmaster's Report

by Ben Weiss

Our MCA website is designed to be a kind of one-stop shopping for information of interest to medal collectors. Thanks to the large and much appreciated contributions of many of our members, in the **Organizational and News Section** we provide items of current interest, including past and upcoming meetings, articles about medals, presentations, and awards given to those preeminent in the field. New material is added regularly, so members are encouraged to send items of interest to the webmaster, and the reader is urged to visit the site regularly.

Insofar as the recent awards is concerned, The Medal Collectors of America issued its 2011 Annual Awards during its MCA meeting on August, 18, 2011, held in conjunction with the ANA convention in Chicago. The Carl Carlson Award went to Scott Miller and the Georgia Stamm Chamberlain Award to Wayne Homren. Hearty congratulations to both.

Several recent talks are cited on our website. One is that by Tony Lopez and Skyler Liechty on *Research and Collecting in the Digital Age*, given at our MCA meeting held in Chicago as part of the ANA convention, August 16-20, 2011. Other presentations that can be viewed on our website are listed below in the **Members Corner**.



The screenshot shows the 'MEMBERS' CORNER' section of the MCA website. At the top, it says 'MEDAL COLLECTORS OF AMERICA'. Below that, there's a 'MEMBERS' CORNER' heading. The section is divided into two columns. The left column lists various resources: 'Organization's Home Page', 'Organization's News and Updates', 'Collector's Guides and Checklists', 'Information, Events and Applications', 'Press and Publicity', 'History and Back Issues', and 'Help Desk & Help the Organization'. The right column contains a 'CONTENTS' section with several links: 'Value of Lecture on Medals Promoting Bigotry: A video presentation on Medals that Promote Religious and Racial Intolerance, given at Villanova University by Ben Weiss. This one-hour presentation reviews the history of intolerance as chronicled by medallic art. [Click on this LINK](#) to hear and see this lecture.', 'Adams, Chao and Bentley publish a new book on Admiral Vernon medals: A new book entitled ADMIRAL VERNON MEDALS: Medals Sometimes Lie by John Adams, Fernando Chao with the collaboration of Anne Bentley will soon be published. More information on this important addition to our medallic literature can be found in the [press release](#) issued by George Kothe. A [sample page](#) can also be viewed as a pdf file. Our heartfelt congratulations on this wonderful achievement.', 'THE ARTWORK OF KARL X. GOETZ: About 600 beautiful images of medals by this one German medalist', 'LORDSBREIT'S MEDAL COLLECTION: Over 350 years of medallic history from the reign of Louis XIV to the end of the Napoleonic era', 'PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL MEDALS: Images of all the official inaugural medals of U.S. Presidents and Vice Presidents. Includes an interesting History of the Official Inaugural Medal by Joe Levine.', 'COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS RELATED TO NAPOLEON: A comprehensive medallic and textual history of Napoleon includes books, drawings, engravings and photographs.', 'MEDALLIONS OF THE NAPOLEONIC ERA: Hundreds of medals arranged according to the Prefecture, Consulate, Empire, and Post Empire Napoleonic Period', and 'NAPOLEONIC MEDALS: Hundreds of fine photographs and descriptions of medals of the Napoleonic era, with standard references.'

Another newsworthy item is the issuance of a newly-designed MCA Club Medal. Thanks to John Adams, who organized the efforts to make this medal, we now have available for our organization an original, limited edition medal. Designed by Alexander Shagin, the medal features a bold multi-level relief. The obverse features a muscular artisan, naked to the waist, striking medals by hand. The reverse depicts Apollo driving his chariot through the sky, with the Muse holding a wreath in her left hand and a trumpet in her right, which she is blowing to announce the restoration of the art of medal making. The theme is most appropriate for the first-ever medal to be sponsored by Medal Collectors of America.

Upcoming events include the meeting of the American Numismatic Association to be held August 7-11, 2012, in Philadelphia, PA. In conjunction with this meeting is our own MCA meeting to be held on Thursday, August 9, from 3-5 pm. Featured will be a Panel Discussion among some of our members, including Bob Fritsch on *Hockey Puck/Paperweight Medals*, Donald Scarinci on *Art Medals*, and Ben Weiss on *Medals Commemorating Important Historical Events*. Ben will be also be giving a Numismatic Theatre presentation (Money Talks) entitled *Medallic History of Religious Intolerance* at the same ANA meeting on Friday, August 10th at 11 am. All are invited to attend.

HISTORICAL AND COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS COLLECTION OF BENJAMIN WEISS	
MEDAL COLLECTIONS ON THE WEB	
HISTORICAL AND COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS Images and descriptions of over 500 medals, both European and American, dating from the 16th through the 19th centuries. This site uses the Medal as the focal point to join Art with History.	COLLECTION OF MEDALS OF THE VATICAN Lovely collection of gold medals of the Vatican.
THE ARTWORK OF KARL X. GOETZ About 600 beautiful images of medals by this one German medalist.	LORDSBREIT'S MEDAL COLLECTION Over 350 years of medallic history from the reign of Louis XIV to the end of the Napoleonic era.
PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL MEDALS Images of all the official inaugural medals of U.S. Presidents and Vice Presidents. Includes an interesting History of the Official Inaugural Medal by Joe Levine.	COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS RELATED TO NAPOLEON A comprehensive medallic and textual history of Napoleon includes books, drawings, engravings and photographs.
MEDALLIONS OF THE NAPOLEONIC ERA Hundreds of medals arranged according to the Prefecture, Consulate, Empire, and Post Empire Napoleonic Period.	NAPOLEONIC MEDALS Hundreds of fine photographs and descriptions of medals of the Napoleonic era, with standard references.

A major effort has been made to provide LINKS to material that may be of interest to medal collectors. For example, we have Links to dozens of interesting **Medal Collections on the Web**, posted online by individuals, organizations and art museums throughout the world. There are also Links to information on **Medal Organizations** in this country

and in Europe. Also posted is a wide variety of general information on medal collecting, both for the beginner and more seasoned medal enthusiasts.

Under **Recommended Reading**, the MCA website has compiled and provided links to an extensive **General Bibliography on Medals**, consisting of about two hundred entries, on which is shown the important Books, Journals and Auction Catalogs related to medal collecting. There is also an **Selected Annotated Bibliography** where we divide the books into specific Topics, Countries and Medallists. As a further guide for the user, we provide commentary on the specific coverage and usefulness of these books. This section has embedded into it links to several books which have been published to the web by Google Books and other online providers. By simply clicking on the relevant link on our site, you will be able to read these wonderful books online.

One of our more ambitious endeavors is the **Oral History Project** (Oral History of Medallic Art), where we have posted to our MCA website several extensive interviews of prominent members of the medallic community. Those posted thus far are interviews of Dick Johnson, John Adams and Eric Newman. By a simple click, one can hear eminent medal collectors relate their personal medallic histories directly to the listener. More of these interviews are in progress and our members are encouraged to participate. Please contact Tony Lopez or the webmaster for more information on how to participate in this important and novel project initiated by the MCA.



In our **Member's Corner** and **News** Sections, we post items sent to us by our members. Of particular interest are links to videos of presentations related to medal collecting. For example, in this section, we have posted videos showing an extremely interesting, four-part series on *The Medal Maker*. These videos were produced by the Medallic Art Company with the script written by Dick Johnson and were originally posted on Wayne Homren's website E-Sylum. There are also videos of individuals (Anne Bentley) presenting seminars on

their medal collecting interests. This latter material was generously sent to the webmaster by Donald Scarinci, who also sent a video on *An Ode to Medals* and his observations on the FIDEM Conference, which are posted on our website.

More recent additions are John Sallay's presentation of *Athena Leading the Way: Her Iconography on Medals*, which was given at the NYINC this January. We have posted his Power Point presentation in its entirety. The figures and text can be viewed there as a pdf file.

Also posted is a video presentation on *Medals that Promote Religious and Racial Intolerance*, given at Villanova University by Ben Weiss this past year. This one-hour presentation reviews the history of intolerance as chronicled by medallic art. This can be heard and viewed through the LINK provided.



There is a link at the MCA website to Webmaster Ben Weiss's Villanova University lecture on "Medals that Promote Religious and Racial Intolerance"

The Archives Section posts Adobe pdf files of past issues of the MCA Advisory, our monthly publication, edited by John Adams and expertly and newly designed by Tony Lopez. Thanks to Pete Smith, we have recently posted one of the earliest editions of the MCA Advisory (July 2000) on to our Archives section. Pete, who was editor of the Advisory at that time, generously sent us this interesting historical edition.

It should be emphasized that recent and new editions of the MCA Advisory are available only to current members. Thanks to the efforts of Tony Lopez, we now post new editions of the MCA Advisory online. These online latest editions of the Advisory are made available only to members, so those not currently members of MCA are encouraged to join us.

In short, there is much exciting and useful information to be seen and heard on our MCA website...and there is much more to come.

Please visit us at: www.medalcollectors.org. 🍌

George Washington's Pocket Piece

By
Spencer Peck

Being a long time collector of Washingtonia and Admiral Vernon medals, I routinely search EBAY for any potential “candidates” for my collection. This story begins with an EBAY notice in early January, 2007 regarding an Admiral Vernon medal to be sold at the Absolute Auction Center in Pleasant Valley, NY on January 13th. It was Lot # 1050 in a sale containing 630 Lots from the Estate of Radford Curdy, former President of the Dutchess County, NY Historical Society. The lot description read as follows: “Medal, Adm. Vernon Porto Bello 1739 from the Estate of Benson J. Lossing; in leather pouch with hand written ticket stating “Gen. Geo. Washington’s Vernon medal pocket piece carried during the Revolution.” rated Very Fine, 35 mm.” Note on Curdy Ticket in pouch indicates type McCormick-Goodhart #38. (Note: It is actually an FCv - 3B or McC-G #187). This sale was scheduled to be conducted both “Live” at the auction house and remotely via EBAY.



**The Benjamin J. Lossing “Washington Pocket Piece”
Admiral Vernon medal from the Estate of Radford Curdy.**

Although I knew nothing of Curdy at this time; the name Lossing did ring a bell as I recalled him as an important historical writer of the second half of the 1800’s. Needless to say, my pulse really quickened at the potential significance of this and immediately decided to personally preview this auction on the only date available: January 12th which was a Friday. The ride from Oldwick, NJ to Pleasant Valley, NY was about 150 miles and passed very quickly. When I arrived, I found a nondescript

“country auction house” and a crowd of the “usual suspects” from C4 already gathered. Not wishing to show my excitement, I viewed a number of the lots, including the target number 1050 and found it to be as described. At this point, I decided to personally attend the sale the next day as, in my experience, computer networks work right only one way, and can fail in a dozen ways. As events developed, this assessment proved correct.



The front and back of the case containing the Vernon medal and written provenance of the medal’s history

I arrived early the next day for the sale, which began at 4 PM and could hardly contain my excitement. The auction room was packed. Now here comes the part where I believe God was smiling on me. As the auction was about to begin, the auctioneer attempted several times to establish the EBAY link without success. At this point he announced the problem and indicated they could either postpone the sale or go ahead with only the attendees actually present. He decided to proceed. As fate would have it, this decision eliminated all the absentee competition which, as I have subsequently found out, was considerable. At this point, I was ready to explode with excitement, having decided the day before that

no matter what happened, MY BID CARD WAS NOT COMING DOWN. Bidding was strong as the auction proceeded, but really a blur to me as I was entirely focused on Lot #1050. When this lot came up, I pulled a "Statue of Liberty" with my card going up and not coming down. After a short time, the hammer fell and the lot was mine.

Having shown this piece a few times, I invariably get the comment along the lines of: "Yes, I saw it also but could not bid because the EBAY link failed." Now the fun commenced, as I had to do extensive further research to confirm the provenance. What follows is my reconstruction of the history of this piece from its origin to present. Also included are backgrounds on each of the "players" involved.



The provenance states that the Vernon medal is a pocket piece George Washington "carried during the Revolution"

The story begins with **Lawrence Washington** born circa 1718 in Westmoreland County, VA near the Rappahannock River. He was George Washington's (1732 - 1799) older half-brother. In 1729, Augustine Washington, father of both Lawrence and George, took Lawrence to England and enrolled him in the Appleby School. Lawrence completed his education and returned to Virginia in 1738, to oversee the management of his father's 2,000 acre plantation on the Potomac River at Little Hunting Creek.

On July 10, 1740, Virginia Governor William Gooch formed four companies of volunteers to support the English expedition against the Spanish in

the Caribbean; he awarded the senior of four Captain's Commissions for these companies to Lawrence Washington. It was signed by King George II, as a "Captain in the Regiment of Foot." This was the 63rd Regiment of Foot, also known as the "American Regiment" or "Gooch's Marines." This Commission survives in the archives at Mount Vernon.

The four Virginia Companies mustered at Williamsburg in August 1740 and set sail for Jamaica in early October. The main British invasion force did not arrive in Jamaica from England until early January 1741. The expedition, under the dual command of Vice Admiral Edward Vernon and Brigadier General Thomas Wentworth, got under way in late January to assault the Spanish fortress at Cartagena, in present day Colombia. At that time, most of the Americans, due to chronic manpower shortages, were seconded to Admiral Vernon's warships to be utilized as Marines. As he would later write to his father, Lawrence was fortunate to be appointed "Captain of the Soldiers acting as Marines" on board Vernon's flagship, the 80-gun H.M.S. *Princess Caroline*.

Lawrence served with distinction in the expeditions against the seaport of Cartagena, New Granada (present day Columbia). Washington also participated in the 1741 British landing at Guantanamo (Cumberland Harbor), Cuba led by Admiral Vernon. Washington survived the yellow fever which killed off large numbers of his fellow soldiers. It was during this period that Washington and Vernon became friends; corresponding long after the war had ended. Lawrence was sufficiently impressed by Vernon's leadership abilities that, upon his return to Virginia, he named his estate "Mount Vernon".

A post-war account of the destruction of a fascine battery flanking one of the principal forts (see *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 14, Jan 1744 page 40) specifically mentions Lawrence. The author of this piece is undoubtedly Vernon, who took great pains to recognize publicly the accomplishments of his men:

"The Author of the Account &c.. Is pleased to celebrate the Destruction of the Fascine Battery, on the Barridera Coast as a bold Attempt of the Sailors. But he makes no mention of the two hundred Soldiers, who were detached on the same Occasion, and who, thou by the Admiral's Disposition they were posted in the Rear, when landed, were called for to advance, and a Lane made for their passing towards the Front, probably because armed more properly than the Sailors, for returning the Fire of the Enemy's Small Arms. It is an Injustice to Capt. Washington, the Hon. Mr. Murray, and to the

rest of the Land Officers, who were detach'd on this Occasion, to pass over their gallant Behavior in Silence; to which might have been mentioned without lessening the Praises due to Capt. Boscawen, Capt. Watson, Capt. Coates &c. who commanded the Sailors, who, as they have ever done, performed their Duty with great Bravery and Resolution, and particularly Lieut. now Capt. Forrest, who, with the foremost, entered the Battery Sword in Hand; the Enemy having fled with Precipitation into the Woods, and the Soldiers being posted upon the Avenues, the Seamen set about spiking the Guns, destroying the Carriages and tearing up the Platforms. . .”

Washington married in July, 1743 to Anne Fairfax (1728-1761), the eldest daughter of Colonel William Fairfax of neighboring Belvoir, himself a land agent for his cousin, Thomas Fairfax, 6th Lord Fairfax of Cameron. The bride was 15 years old, the groom twenty five.

Lawrence Washington was a founding member of the Ohio Company of Virginia, and a member of the colonial legislature representing Fairfax County. He was chiefly responsible for securing the establishment of the town of Alexandria, Virginia on the banks of the Potomac River. In May 1749, Governor William Gooch signed an Act to establish the town of Alexandria, and Lawrence was granted permission to "be absent from the Service of the House, for the Recovery of his Health."

In July 1749, Lawrence sailed to London to conduct business on behalf of the Ohio Company, and to consult English physicians. By this time, Lawrence was suffering from what was then called Consumption, now known as Tuberculosis. George routinely accompanied his older brother Lawrence to the warm springs at Bath (present-day Berkeley Springs, West Virginia), which Lawrence visited frequently to cure his ailments. In 1751, they traveled together to Barbados hoping that its climate might further help Lawrence who was by now very ill. This was the only trip that George Washington ever took outside the confines of what was to become the United States. Lawrence died on July 26, 1752 at Mt Vernon. Lawrence and Anne had several children, none of whom lived past childhood. On the death of Lawrence's widow in 1761, George inherited Lawrence's estate and personal effects at Mount Vernon.

One of the few surviving portraits of Lawrence Washington is at Mount Vernon, where George Washington kept it in his private study on the ground floor. It is the only family portrait honored



This Portrait of Lawrence Washington (above) is displayed in the study at Mount Vernon (below)



with a place in the Study. Although it is unsigned and undated, the portrait clearly depicts Lawrence in his military uniform. He posed wearing the scarlet "undressed" frock coat issued him in 1741 when he was commissioned as a Captain in the British Army, and the green regimental vest of the "American Regiment." The vest is trimmed with gold lace (as befits a commanding officer), as is the peak of his tricornered hat. When the leading experts on Colonial American military history visited Mount Vernon in the late 1960s, they described the portrait as "the finest example" of an American officer's uniform from the period.

It is during the ten year period between Lawrence's return from the war in 1742 and his death in 1752 that he would reasonably have regaled his

younger brother, George, with stories of the war and the exploits of his hero, Edward Vernon.

Upon George Washington's death in 1799, an inventory of the contents, and money value of his estate at Mount Vernon was prepared. It is currently recorded in the public records in Fairfax, Virginia. Of most significance to us was "An iron chest in the Study." In this were listed stock of the United States Bank, Bank of Alexandria, Potomac Company, James River Company and Columbia Company; \$254.70 in cash, several Order of Cincinnati Eagles, 1 large gold medal of George Washington (presumably his personal Washington Before Boston medal), a large medal of Paul Jones, 11 medals in a case and 3 other metal medals among other small effects. The Vernon medal may well have been one of these latter three.



Period printed photo of Benson J. Lossing
(New York Historical Society)

The story now moves on to **Benson J. Lossing** (1813 - 1891). Benson John Lossing, born in Beekman, Dutchess County, New York, was a wood-engraver, author, and editor. In 1848, Lossing conceived of the idea of writing a narrative history, decorated with wood engravings, of the American Revolution. This opus established Lossing's reputation. He subsequently became a prolific writer of books, with more than forty titles in history and biography to his credit. The first installment of the narrative history was published in Harper's New

Monthly Magazine in 1850, but three years passed before the completed "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution" was published. To gather material for the work, Lossing traveled more than 8,000 miles throughout the United States and Canada. The book was well received and is still a standard reference.



George Washington Parke Custis
(Library of Congress)

In the course of researching his narrative history, Lossing met with **George Washington Parke Custis** (1781 - 1857) at Arlington House, now the site of Arlington National Cemetery. It was as a result of this meeting that Lawrence Washington's Vernon medal, perhaps one of the three medals in the iron chest in the study, would have passed to Lossing, most likely as a gift. George Washington Parke Custis, was the adopted son (and also step-grandson) of George Washington. He was the grandson of Martha Washington through her first marriage. After his natural father John Parke Custis died, he grew up at Mount Vernon with George and Martha Washington.

In 1868, Lossing moved to Dover Plains, Dutchess County, New York, where he had a fireproof library constructed to house his collection of over five thousand books, letters, manuscripts, maps and artifacts. This collection was comprised mostly of correspondence that relates to his varied career endeavors and interests. His correspondents represented a who's who in arts, education, history, literature, journalism, writing, editing, publishing, law, government, and politics. Other letters of note

include those from New York State Library officials regarding materials in its holdings related to the American Revolution. In addition to correspondence, this collection contains notes on the discovery of Revolutionary War manuscripts at Kingston, the raising of the West Point chain, and reminiscences regarding Revolutionary War officers.

Lossing was actively involved in several charitable, civic, literary, and historical clubs and societies in Dutchess County. He was one of the founders of Vassar Women's College in Poughkeepsie, NY. Benson Lossing died June 3, 1891, in Dover Plains, New York.



Radford B. Curdy, Dutchess County Historian.
The Vernon Medal came from an auction of his estate.

Radford B. Curdy, from whose estate this medal was obtained, was a Dutchess County Historian, noted for his expertise on Colonial America, and a recognized authority on the American Revolution. He was himself descended from early Hudson Valley families. A lifetime resident of Dutchess County, he had been schooled locally, and then attended Columbia University, where he had majored in History and Political Science. Aside from his formal education, he had acquired other training and skills that would prove invaluable. His father, Frank A. Curdy, a respected Jeweler and Horologist, had educated him in gemstones, metals, and timepieces.

A self taught Numismatist, Curdy had spent years studying Colonial Currency and medals, and was considered extremely knowledgeable in the field. His fluency in German and French, combined with his

years of deciphering early church records and documents, had made him adept at translations. All in all, he had broad knowledge that would serve him well through the years ahead. Enthralled with the past, he had also pursued archaeological research, excavating numerous revolutionary sites and working with archaeologists on other historical sites. This work would later bring him considerable fame in the area.

In 1959, using his ancestral name "de Corday," he published his first work, "The Flow of Destiny," for the 350th Hudson-Champlain Celebration. The ensuing years would see him author and publish numerous articles of historical interest for periodicals, journals, and newspapers. He began his career as a Journalist in the 60's. For 10 years he worked for the Peekskill Evening Star as their Historical Research reporter, and then as Editor. In demand as a public speaker, he attended many historical events and functions. It was during this period that he rose to prominence.

Always involved in archaeological research and excavations, he became recognized for his research on the role of Fishkill in the Revolution, and for the excavation of the Fishkill Barracks site. He would later become Director of The Fishkill Historical Restoration. In 1976 he served as consultant for the Bicentennial, and in the early 80's as Dutchess County's Historian. Throughout his lifetime he was associated with many historical organizations and held many titles: Honorary Officer of the 2nd Bn. 258th N.Y. Artillery "The Washington Greys," President of the Fishkill Historical Society, Director of the Fishkill Historical Restoration, Historian for Dutchess County, and Trustee of the Historical Society of Middletown and Wallkill Precinct.

In addition to being a Historian; he was an acknowledged Historical Genealogist. His life's work, compiled over 50 years, is represented in the "Radford B. Curdy History & Genealogy Collection," endowed to the Mamakating Historical Society upon his death. In his later years, driven to complete his opus, he had worked tirelessly on his genealogy, at a great cost to his constitution. At the time of his death, he left two historical books unfinished. Time had run out. He never married and died in 2002 at age 67.

In attempting to discover how Curdy obtained this medal, I contacted both the auction house and the Dutchess County, NY Historical Society, inquiring if they had any ledgers or other records of his collection or knowledge of any other family members who I might contact. The auction house was not responsive, but the Historical Society replied that he was indeed a Past President of the Society and had kept his collection there while alive. They had no records or knowledge of any other family members. I suspect

that anything that was not considered “salable,” was consigned to a dumpster prior to the auction of his estate.

So ends my quest to develop the chain of ownership for this humble, worn Vernon medal: the pocket piece of our first President. The time it took to do the research was repaid many times over in knowledge gained. May every collector find some piece that will trigger the same joyful historical journey experienced by me. 🍀

[**Editors Note:** Readers should be aware that at least one other coin is claimed as GW's pocket piece: Eric Newman exhibited a gold coin said to be just that at the banquet of the Central States Numismatic Society Convention in April, 1957. What he calls his favorite coin is a large eagle pattern dated 1792 (Rulau/Ford Baker 20B – silver example is shown below). Roughly half a dozen are known in copper and a similar number in silver, but Mr. Newman's example is the only specimen known in gold. We will solicit his comments on this remarkable piece for our next issue. Ed.]



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Medal and Coin Collector's Cabinet

Attributed to Duncan Phyfe & Son, New York, Circa 1840

By

Anthony A. P. Stuempfig

Probably unique in American furniture for the period, this Restaurátion (as in the French Restaurátion—after the Empire and before the Charles X periods) style medal and coin collector's cabinet exhibits the very finest construction and materials to be found in American furniture for the period.

With the exception of the backboards and secondary woods in feet and top of carcass, the cabinet is made entirely of mahogany. Rich veneers of many types of mahogany are to be seen inside and out. Of particular interest to medal and coin collectors was the survival of small paper labels in a number of drawers, noting that Vespasians and Nervas had been part of a collection which included Roman coins. This cabinet was undoubtedly commissioned for an existing collection with the potential to add further acquisitions in the future.



The cabinet closed and fall-front with sunburst of silk upholstery and a gilt stamped brass rosette of the period in the center. The cabinet is quite heavy due to its almost entire construction in mahogany, so is on casters so that it could be easily moved if desired.

The sides and backs of each drawer were constructed of fine Santo Domingo mahogany and the bottoms of bay wood, which is similar to cigar-box mahogany. Spanish cedar is often found in small drawer construction in furniture made in Phyfe's shop, but there must have been concern about the wood gassing off and possibly tarnishing or degrading the medals and coins in the drawers. There is very little gassing off with mahogany as the best wood is slow growing and very dense and shrinkage, which would indicate gassing off, is negligible even after more than 150 years. The finest of dovetails on drawer sides make clear that this piece of furniture was made in the shop of one of the finest cabinetmakers in the United States. But the use of mahogany did not end there. No matter where you look, the finest mahogany and mahogany veneers were utilized.



A frontal view showing drawers and fall front when the collector desired to examine a medal or coin. The drawers are flanked by three cubby holes left and right and two large drawers at bottom left and right.

As the images show, some drawers had liners in which circles of various diameters had been cut with great precision under which silk velvet was laid. Others were compartmentalized with fine interlocked mahogany strips under which the silk velvet was laid. Yet others had a series of compartmentalized trays, which could be removed to expose similar stacked trays in the same drawer. The fineness and exactitude of the construction is absolutely astounding and makes one wonder how such precision and perfection could have been accomplished 170 years ago utilizing only hand tools throughout.



The different types of drawer inserts are shown here. Some had silk velvet liners with ribbons to lift coins/medals and others no lining.

At the very top of the range of drawers, and across the entire width, is a draw of mahogany which could be pulled out on which one could display an example or examples, or, an oil lamp to illuminate the contents of an open drawer or examples below displayed or being examined on the leather-covered fall front. During the period the leather would have been a bright color and blind and gilt tooled in numerous geometric patterns by utilizing what is called a roulette, which was also used by turners when applying the designs found running around ormolu (gilt brass or bronze) capitols and bases for the columns on Empire period furniture, and, stamps of various motifs in the corners.



Original Carara marble top. Hardware is gilt brass ring pulls and finely turned ivory knobs on bottom drawers.

Gilt brass rings/pulls on each drawer allowed easy access to their contents. Their simplicity did not take away from the beauty and linearity of the design. The two large drawers on the bottom right and left had finely turned ivory pulls, while flanking the range of drawers on left and right are three large, vertical rectangular, deep pigeon or cubby holes for the storage of various related materials.

Medals are beautiful but so too can be the cabinet that holds them. 🍷

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CCAC Reviews Montford Point Marine Gold Medal

By

Donald Scarinci

At the administrative meeting of the Citizens coinage Advisory Committee held on June 26, 2012, members were treated to a preview of the Congressional gold medal to be awarded to the Montford Marines the next day.



It is not usual for the mint staff to bring finished products to the CCAC meeting. Richard A. Peterson, Acting Director of the United States Mint and Donald Everhart, the US Mint Sculptor-Engraver who designed the reverse of the medal were on hand to answer questions as the medal, carefully ensconced in jewelers tissue, and was passed around to each member for a close inspection.



Congress had authorized the gold medal in recognition of the more than 20,000 people who were trained between August 26, 1942 and September, 1949

at Camp Montford Point in Jacksonville, North Carolina in a segregated camp for African Americans who enlisted in the Marines. The camp was created after President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order establishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission in June, 1941. The Mint estimates that 400 of the recruits trained at Montford point are still alive.

The obverse of the medal was designed by Michael Gaudio. It features three marines. Below them is a vignette of men in training. The inscription is around the edge. The CCAC recommended this design for the obverse and the Secretary of the Treasury selected it.



The reverse design that the Secretary selected did not get a recommendation from either the CCAC or the Commission on Fine Arts. Even though the water tower is an important element, the CCAC felt that the small rows of troops would be lost on the medal. We preferred an alternative design of a powerful eagle. However, the Secretary of the Treasury has the final word and this medal is now a part of American history. The Montford Point Marines award ceremony was held on June 28 at the Washington, D.C., residence of the 35th commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, General James F. Amos. Specimens of the medal in bronze are available for purchase from the U.S. Mint. 🇺🇸

The Medal-of-the-Month Club

Created by Felicity Buranelli

Compiled by Harry Waterson

This is a Catalogue Raisonné of the medals and emblems commissioned by Felicity Buranelli from 1939 to 1972. During that time she issued 10 medals and 2 emblems under the umbrella title THE MEDAL-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB. This catalogue tells the story of Miss Buranelli and the stories of the medals she issued.

Miss Buranelli did not have exclusive use of her title. At one time the Lincoln Mint had THE MEDAL OF THE MONTH SOCIETY which actually issued a medal a month. There was also a medal dealer in Sioux Falls, SD who had a MEDAL OF THE MONTH CLUB. He sold commemoratives, medals and tokens of his choice under the Medal-Of-The-Month name. There were others who also used the term so confusion abounds.

This particular club was the creation of Felicity Buranelli (1893-1979). She began work on it in the 1930s and it was to occupy her for the rest of her life. Her intention was to create a series of medals that would inspire the youth of America. She wanted medals that would depict the lives of great men and women who have made and are still making the history of America and preserving Democracy.

Her first series of medals commemorated the lives of the pioneers of aviation. She intended to then go on to additional series honoring heroes from other fields of endeavor in America. She never got past aviation. She began to issue her Aviation Series in 1941 with a run of four medals. The attempt at a monthly issue quickly faltered and she continued to issue medals on a very intermittent basis until 1962 when she released her eighth medal honoring John Glenn and then she disbanded her club. Later she issued two more medals that served as memorials; one in honor of her brother who was an innovative aircraft designer and one for a Jesuit priest who had had a large impact on her life. The entire ten-medal run spanned 31 years from 1941 to 1972.

Buranelli described her aviation heroes as all having exhibited Courage, Vision and untiring Work. These three words were her inspirational mantra for the youth of America. She used COURAGE, VISION and WORK as the legend on the emblems she had designed for the boys and girls of her club to wear. These two emblems are also included in this Catalogue Raisonné.

The Medal-Of-The-Month Club was Felicity Buranelli. She chose the subjects. She picked the artists and gave them their direction. She wrote the copy for the reverse of the medals. She supervised the

production of the medals and she was in charge of advertising and promotion. She held all the copyrights but one. She raised the money and she was her only distributor. She was very proud of the fact that she did this all herself and had not allowed crass commercialism to enter into any phase of her program. The process was very slow and painstaking but the medals she produced were remarkable. Not so her success as a business woman and entrepreneur. She was still selling these medals out of her Manhattan apartment as late as 1976.

This soft-cover monograph is 82 pages long. It is in 8½x11-inch format with 22 pages of color. The catalogue will answer the question; what took her so long?

Book Review by John W. Adams

MCA member Harry Waterson has just published an 82 page catalogue : MEDAL OF THE MONTH CLUB/Created by Felicity Buranelli. The MOMTC series, which includes ten medals and two emblems was issued by Ms. Buranelli over a 33 year period. For the obverse portraits of selected heroes such as Wilbur Wright and Amelia Earhart, she employed well known sculptors such as Julio Kilenyi, Brenda Putnam and Carl Schmitz; on the reverse, she composed inscriptions that elucidate a patriotic theme tied to the individual depicted on the obverse

Mr. Waterson catalogues the 12 works in great detail, providing an image of each as well as comprehensive metrological data. Appended are biographies of Ms. Buranelli as well as the sculptors, all of this supplemented with a variety of related and semi-related information on the general subject.

The author is to be commended for calling attention to an under-recognized series of medals comparable in quality to better known works issued by the Society of Medalists or the Hall of Fame grouping. Fellow collectors will be impressed that Mr. Waterson, using EBay and other sources, was able to complete his Medal of the Month set at average price of \$39 per piece.

The Catalogue can be purchased for \$25 by those applying to Underpaid Productions LLC, 383 River Drive, Branson, MO, 65616. 🍷

~ Vernon Corner ~

It is fitting that Spencer Peck, the author of this issue's lead article, should also be the discoverer of a new variety of Admiral Vernon medal. The reverse of the discovery piece is the same as PBv YY. The obverse is exactly the same as PBv 50 EXCEPT that in the left field has been added cannon and other trophies of war. This obverse treatment is reminiscent of obverses FCv 16 and 17. Vernon's left sleeve has been re-engraved as a gauntlet, a feature also found on obverses FCv 16 and 17. Whereas the changes are quite elegant, apparently they did no favor to the strength of the die, accounting for the great rarity of the new variety.



**New Vernon Variety PBvi 27-QQ Obverse
(Paired with PBv YY reverse)**

Numbering this new variety offered a bit of a dilemma. With the icon added, it could logically be classified with the PBvi (Vernon with icons) series. However, that would remove it from its closest relatives – obverse PBv 50 and reverse PBv YY. A panel of three specialists voted two to one to attribute the discovery to the PBvi classification. It is forever hereafter known as PBvi 27-QQ.

Keen students will note that the additions to the obverse are by a finer hand than the one that made the original. Either old dies were sold or, more likely, work was handed out to whomever on the staff was available.

~ Letters to the Editor ~

From: Marcy Leavitt Bourne

Sent: Tuesday, July 10, 2012

To: Adams, John

Subject: Re: Your journal

Dear John,

It has arrived this morning, and is absolutely stunning – the journal I mean – and I am delighted to be a part of it. Thank YOU for the opportunity, and I think the layout and the presentation of my piece look marvellous. I shall forward a copy to Jane, who I know will be thrilled. I'm off today to Glasgow for FIDEM, presenting a paper on Friday. A few nerves. However, everyone is friendly. Thank you again, and congratulations for putting together such a handsome journal, and for saying such nice things in your editorial.

Best wishes, Marcy

• • • •

From: Harry & Phyllis Salyards

Sent: Wednesday, July 04, 2012 2:31 PM

To: Adams, John

Subject: the Lewis Morris specimen

Dear John,

I've just finished with your poignant piece in the latest *Advisory*. It touched me deeply, on this Independence Day which had found me questioning the very existence of that real "Spirit of '76"--*not* the presumed civic duty to buy what we don't need with money we don't have, but the real dedication to Liberty which animated those men, on that hot July day in Philadelphia so long ago. And I found myself coming back to those last two words of the Declaration: "sacred honor." We know way too little of *that* these days, when politicians and preachers and all manner of other publicly-prominent persons feel that, having betrayed their constituencies, all that is necessary is to shed some crocodile tears and call for "forgiveness" and all is OK. Well, it isn't. "Sacred honor": why sacred, and to whom? And it seems obvious that the honor is sacredly due *to one another*.

A duty to stand by their word - and live it. And once betrayed, it's *gone for good*. Just as you speak of the duty to honorably maintain the archive of Lieutenant

Colonel Morris, when you know full well that the coin hobby is full of philistines who wouldn't hesitate to split up that archive, if they could turn a profit on the *pieces*. You are an honorable man, John, and esteemed because of it.

It's a small thing, compared to what you acquired, but I did recently obtain the LaRiviere example of the Greene restrike, from the 1886 copy dies. With its gorgeous mirror fields, I suspect it has to be one of the very earliest struck--before the mint director decreed the ugly changes in finish that came to prevail in the later 1890s.

Warm regards,

Harry

• • • •

From: Joel Orosz
Sent: June 28, 2012
To: Adams, John
Subject: You've made Greene into Gold!

Dear John:

As an old Ph.D. in American history, I always admire any historian who can spell *Nathanael* correctly and spell check be damned. My admiration is enhanced when an historian appreciates the tactical genius of General Greene, who never won a battle, but who nonetheless all but won the Revolutionary War. My admiration overfloweth when a historian writes such a compulsively readable article on these subjects in the *MCA Advisory*. And I positively slosh around in my overflowed admiration when said historian does such a remarkable job of curating (through the invaluable good offices our friend Anne) the precious documentation surrounding the Greene *Comitia* medal.

Brilliant times four, my friend. A more faithful steward of irreplaceable materials of our nation's history is not to be found.

I am looking forward very much to seeing you at the G5 dinner, and--if I am lucky--on other occasions during the convention. Until then, keep that pen scratching across the paper!

Warm regards,

Joel

• • • •

Dear John,

Congratulations on the May-Jun issue. Its appearance is fully worthy of being displayed on my (or anyone else's) coffee table. To me, the letters to the editorial are particularly interesting, so I read The Advisory from back to front.

Nicholas C. Adams,
Gladwyn, PA

• • • •

From: David Greenberg
Sent: June 24, 2012
To: Anne E. Bentley
Subject: Libertas Americana

Dear Ms. Bentley,

I've been meaning to contact you for quite a while for two reasons - first to let you know how much I enjoyed your text COMITIA AMERICANA and second to provide you with information on one additional Libertas Americana medal to add to your census.

I've attached photos of the piece which I acquired in the mid 1970s - it was brought back directly from the UK by a prominent dealer who knew I had been seeking a nice copy - which I believe (personal bias hopefully aside) this is. I was told this came from an old family collection via Spinks at one time over the "centuries." It has never been published nor out of my hands since I acquired it. I have shown it directly to a PCGS grader several years ago who wanted to encapsulate it as a 65+ but I chose to keep it "free." Pardon the quality of the photos as I shot them without a copy stand.

I've also enclosed pictures of the display board I have it mounted in along with a Washington before Boston bronze which came from the Ford collection via Stacks auction. In the catalog it was described as finest seen "original" by cataloger George Fuld.

Thanks for your time (from a fellow Syracuse grad).

Dr David A Greenberg
Executive Director
Chicago Eye Institute



• • • •

Dear Mr. Adams - I would like to bring to your attention two fascinating items that perhaps have colonial interest, one a Wermuth medal with an interesting John Law type of legend, and the other a Nuremberg Jeton issued from 1774-1777 with the unlikely reverse legend of "NACH AMERIKA."

The Wermuth medal has the legend of DA PECUNIAM/GIB GELD HER Through the efforts of a kindly German-born citizen, he has identified the likely meaning of this as "Give it to me, I cheated" (unfairly obtained?) and "Give up the Money." The date seems quite late for Law, but Wermuth used this later date in one other example from your fine book.

This seems to be similar to John Law medal legends, so I would be most interested in hearing your thoughts on it.

The jeton comes from my collection, and is from the small guildhouse of Johann Georg Kunstmann, who was a master from 1761-1780. I am doing an article of these NACH AMERIKA pieces, by which I concluded that they were struck from 1774, when Louis XVI was enthroned, to 1777, when Kunstmann was last listed in the capacity of a master. Kunstmann died in 1780, which means that the window during which these were struck would be at most 6 years. The jeton is quite tiny at 19.5mm and .97gr. Two types are known, one with Louis XVI and the other with an obverse die with Elisabeth Petrovna of Russia, both with the same reverse die, though.

I would be most interested in hearing your thoughts on these. With appreciation...Robert Levinson, Los Angeles

[Dear Mr. Levinson – Thank you for your submission of two most interesting pieces. The Wermuth medal, dated 1738, bears some similarity to the John Law medals but it was struck long after the interest in Law had died down. As you know, many of the law medals were executed by Wermuth but, alas, the similarity ends there.

I have referred your NACH AMERIKA jeton to Tony Lopez and Skyler Liechty who will append their comments in due course. My best, John]



• • • •



From: Adams, John
To: Tony Lopez
Subject: FW: Two Betts Related medals
Date: Sat, 7 Jul 2012 12:42:38 -0400

Tony,

Did the NACH AMERIKA intrigue you at all?

The jeton is farfetched in terms of any relationship to John Law.

John

• • • •

John,

Yes, I was intrigued by the NACH AMERIKA!

Louis XVI, ships, America...with the timing, it could refer to the French assistance in the Revolutionary war, or maybe, French interests in Canada?

A curious find and I'm guessing rare? A search about it came up empty. . .

The texture of the jeton and image of Louis XVI does look like other Kunstmann jetons so it is period and thus there should be something written about it somewhere.

Now let me venture a guess. The two obverses matched with the NACH AMERIKA reverse, Petrovna as Empress of Russia, and Louis XVI as King of France, cannot be easily related because Petrovna died in 1762, 12 years before Louis XVI was made king in 1774. With the Elizabeth Petrovna obverse the reverse may have been created earlier, and may have related to the Russian insistence in 1759-1760 that the French focus on their continental interests and not America. I haven't quite wrapped my head around all of that history, and can't do the learning curve just now in the middle of a move to Los Angeles. Later the reverse may have been re-used or re-executed for the French assistance in the Revolutionary War from Louis XVI.

I agree on the Law. A stretch, and is missing the texture of the other Wermuth Law pieces (of the 1719-1720 period).





This Admiral Vernon medal (FCv 3-B) struck to commemorate Vernon's victory at Fort Chagre comes with a provenance identifying it as George Washington's pocket piece "carried during the Revolution". Lawrence Washington (below), George's older brother and mentor, fought valiantly under Vernon at Cartagena. He later built his estate on land left to him by their father. He aptly named the estate Mount Vernon after the famous Admiral who most inspired him in battle. Lawrence passed down Mount Vernon estate - and this medal - to George Washington upon his death in 1752.

